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SENATE

Senate Bill No. 1256

Introduced by Senator Manny Villar

EXPLANATORY NOTE

In "Ina at anak", a painting by national treasure Fernando Cueto Amorsolo, *Pambansang Artista* in Visual Arts for 1972, the mother is depicted "as one who will even go to the point of sacrificing her own life for the sake of her child." The stunning vista captured the poignant bond between mother and child. That from birth, the mother will painstakingly take care of her beloved infant providing him food, shelter and clothing. From the long hours of labor in the delivery room to the time of his/her education, the mother is there to offer the greatest of affection to her offspring.¹

This legislation is submitted as a paean to every Filipino mother.

The country's maternal mortality rate (MMR) is among the highest in Southeast Asia at 162/100,000 childbirths as compared to Thailand and Malaysia with MMR of 40/100,000 livebirths. In a report of the Department of Health, many of our women die during delivery for lack of access to quality emergency obstetric care (EMOC) particularly in rural and underserved areas. 6 out of 10 Filipinas deliver at home where they are exposed to many dangers.²

This legislation is highlighted by the following points:

1. The local government units are mandated to upgrade and improve devolved health services and medical facilities to provide quality EMOC.

2. The LGUs shall encourage facility-based delivery among all women and shall retain health workers, e.g., medical doctors, nurses, and midwives, who deliver these health services. For the purpose, the local health clinics and health offices as well as the satellite offices of the Department of Health are hereby mandated to be of 24-hour assistance to Filipino mothers.

3. The local government units are empowered to provide and formulate programs that will promote the increase in salaries and incentives of health workers.

Early cognizance of this bill is earnestly sought.


MANNY VILLAR

¹ From the website of National Artist Fernando Amorsolo, paraphrased

² Department of Health, Sec. Francisco Duque III, August 5, 2007

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
FIFTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

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SENATE
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

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AN ACT
SAFEGUARDING THE HEALTH OF FILIPINO MOTHERS AT THE TIME OF
THEIR CHILDBIRTH, PROVIDING PROTECTIVE MECHANISMS
THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Be it enacted by the House of Representatives and the Senate in Congress of the Philippines assembled:

SECTION 1. Consistent with the State policy that the State shall protect and promote the right to health of the people and instill health consciousness among them and the constitutional declaration that the State shall enhance the welfare and safety of women, it is hereby declared to be the policy of the State to provide maximum safeguarding of Filipino mothers at the time of their childbirths.

SECTION 2. No maternity hospital, clinic, health center, lying-in, midwifery facilities or similar center, public or private, shall deny or refuse to assist, admit or entry of a mother at the time of childbirth. They shall ensure the highest safety mechanism to prevent child switching, child trafficking or the commission of any crime that may lead to the endangering of the lives of both mother and child.

SECTION 3. The respective local government units (LGUs) in cooperation with the Department of Health (DOH) are mandated to upgrade and improve devolved health services and medical facilities to provide quality emergency obstetric care (EMOC).

SECTION 4. The local government units (LGUs) shall encourage facility-based delivery among all women and shall retain health workers, e.g., medical doctors, nurses, and midwives, who deliver these health services.

The local health clinics and health offices as well as the satellite offices of the Department of Health are hereby encouraged to be of 24-hour assistance to Filipino mothers.

The local government units are empowered to provide and formulate programs that will promote the increase in salaries and incentives of health workers.

SECTION 5. To complement the provisions of this Act, the Department of Health in coordination with the Professional Regulation Commission (PRC) and the relevant organization of midwives shall professionalize further the practice of midwifery in the country and empower them to be key health care professionals

in providing care to mothers and newborns and reducing maternal mortality and newborn mortality rates.

SECTION 6. The Department of Health shall issue the necessary rules and regulations to implement the provisions of this Act.

SECTION 7. This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its complete publication in the Official Gazette or in at least two newspapers of general circulation, whichever comes earlier.

Approved,